



Oral History
of
BEATRICE LEVI

Marcie Cohen Ferris, Oral Historian

Weaving Women's Words

February 4, 2002

Baltimore, Maryland

This interview is part of the Nicki Newman Tanner Oral History Archive at the Jewish Women's Archive.

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PREFACE

The Jewish Women's Archive, a national non-profit organization founded in 1995, chronicles the stories, struggles, and achievements of Jewish women in North America.

Over the past century, Jewish women have made extraordinary cultural, political, intellectual, and religious contributions to our society. They have been the bearers of tradition and the forgers of new paths; they have shaped our lives, built our institutions, and nurtured our communities in ways both celebrated and unheralded. Yet their voices have too often been missing from the pages of history.

For *Weaving Women's Words*, the Jewish Women's Archive conducted oral histories with 60 Jewish women living in Baltimore and Seattle. Born in the early decades of the 20th century, these women lived through decades of political, social, and economic upheaval, as well as dramatic changes in expectations for women and Jews. Doctors and lawyers, teachers and salesladies, politicians and government workers, homemakers and community volunteers, our narrators reflect the diverse range of backgrounds, affiliations, and choices made by Jewish women who grew up in the shadow of the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the struggle for a Jewish state. Their life stories were the inspiration for exhibitions in Seattle and Baltimore that combined excerpts from the interviews, ethnographic portraits by photographer Joan Roth, and works of contemporary art in a variety of media.

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BL: So, briefly, before you start -- who and what -- so that I get a sense of where I am in all this.

MF: OK. Well, you yell at me when you want to take a break. Do you need to have some water or anything?

BL: I have water out there.

MF: OK.

BL: If you want some.

MF: OK. All right, so I am just going to make a brief little announcement here. My name is Marcie Cohen Ferris. And, today is Monday, February the 4th, 2002. We're in Baltimore, Maryland. And I am interviewing -- did I say the right date? Yes. And, I am interviewing Beatrice Levi. Is it Beatrice? And they call you?

BL: Beatty.

MF: And this is for the "Weaving Women's Words" Project. So, Beatty, we're just going to start with the beginning -- which is - - can you give me your name, date of birth, and where you were born?

BL: My name is Beatrice Looban Levi. I was born at Hebrew Hospital -- Mount Sinai Hospital in Baltimore on July 12th, 1919.

MF: July 12th?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: Let me get this up in front of you. [moves microphone in front of Mrs. Levi] Just want to make sure we get that. Now, tell me again the hospital.

BL: It was known then as the Hebrew Hospital. It's now Sinai Hospital when they moved up town.

MF: And let's go back to your parents. Give me your parents' names -- your mother and your father.

BL: My mother's name - maiden name -- was Rena Jaffee.

MF: Can you spell that for me?

BL: J-A-F-F-E.

MF: Is that Rena - R-E-N-A?

BL: Right. Mmm hmm.

MF: And --

BL: She was born in the Ukraine -- and, came to the United States when she was a really young child.

MF: With family?

BL: With her parents. One of her brothers had preceded her. And, two brothers arrived with her.

MF: And what was the connection to Baltimore? Did they come to Baltimore? Where did they come?

BL: With the boat - -they came on the Hamburger American Line -- which arrived in Baltimore. And they had, I guess you'd call them landsleit here -- not relatives -- who had found a grocery store for them. It wasn't a grocery store. It was General Merchandise. I have pictures of it -- in Salem, West Virginia. And, they remained in Salem until it was time for the boys to go to high school

MF: So, Salem?

BL: Salem. S-A-L-E-M -- on the Ohio River.

MF: OK. Until it was time for what?

BL: For her brothers to go to high school

MF: And then, what happened?

BL: They came to Baltimore. They had arrived with a little money, I understand. And, I guess they made a little in the small store. And, I don't think they were there more than 4 or 5 years -- because the boys were 13 when they came back to Baltimore. And they bought two houses-- one at 1010 West Fayette Street. And one at 1012 West Fayette Street.

MF: How do you spell Fayette?

BL: F-A-Y-E-T-T-E. And, they lived in one. And they lived off of the rentals of the other.

MF: The rentals?

BL: I don't think they had much more than that -- but they kept the store. They didn't sell the business. And, another immigrant family took it over. And, I guess, gave them some rental. But, I'm talking about really modest money.

MF: What part of town is West Fayette in?

BL: Very close to Holland Street, where H. L. Mencken lived, for example. A very decent, middle class neighborhood at the time. Not East Baltimore.

MF: So, what part of town is it?

BL: It's West Baltimore. It still looks pretty good, interestingly enough.

MF: How come they chose that area?

BL: Because they always removed themselves from the center of Jewish life, so to speak. They thought of themselves as better-educated and -- my grandfather had gone to the Gymnasium in - not in Vienna, but in Graetz -- And my grandmother was well-

connected to some wealthy families. Uncle who was a Baron.

And so, they --

MF: They didn't want to be in a ghetto.

BL: They didn't want to be in a ghetto. Though they were extremely Orthodox -- not extremely -- but, they were Orthodox. Certainly. They were Sabbath observers. Talking about my grandparents. And, my grandfather had conducted services all up and down that Ohio River, on the High Holidays. Not because he was an ordained Rabbi, but because he was better educated than most.

MF: What was his name?

BL: Louis Jaffee.

MF: Is that L-O-U --

BL: I-S.

MF: And then your grandmother's name?

BL: Was Anna.

MF: Anna?

BL: Mmm hmm. My father arrived in Baltimore in 1914 -- having lived his whole adult life in South Africa, although he was born in a Danzig corridor, which I guess which was Poland, Lithuania, Latvia - -I mean it was rolling back and forth -- in a small town called Jacobstadt.

MF: Do you know how to spell that?

BL: JacobS-T-A-D-T. And, when he was very young, an uncle who was childless took him back to South Africa, to raise him. So, he arrived in the United States, very well-positioned. He had some money which he had inherited from his successful uncle.

He had a British passport. And he spoke English. His own family had arrived in the interim.

__: [telephone rings]

BL: Do you want to turn that off a minute?

MF: Sure.

__: (break in tape)

MF: What's your father's name?

BL: Abraham Looban. L-O-O-B-A-N.

MF: B-A-N?

BL: Mmm hmm. I'll show you something interesting. If I can lay my hands on it quickly. I should have laid it out. I have it here. My birth certificate. That's over here. [Sounds of unrolling papers] OK. Well, any way -- my father subsequently died in 1924. He and my mother were married in 1918. And he was extremely Orthodox.

MF: Why did he come to Baltimore?

BL: Because his family had arrived here in the interim.

MF: Oh, OK. Do you know how they met?

BL: I'm not sure.

MF: They married in 1914?

BL: No. They married in 1918.

MF: 1918. He arrived in 1914?

BL: Yes.

MF: OK. And, what do you know about their early years together?

BL: You know, I was five years old when they died -- when my father died.

MF: OK.

BL: And my sister was 13 weeks old.

MF: What did he die from?

BL: A ruptured appendix. Was something similar -- something ruptured. And peritonitis had set in.

MF: And, what kind of work was he doing?

BL: He manufactured burlap for ships - big liners. Which had been his uncle's business. So, he came here with the knowledge, with cap -- a small amount of capital. I don't mean --

MF: Right.

BL: I don't want to --

MF: Yes. Some funds. So what happened to you and your sister and your mother? Was it just the two siblings?

BL: Mmm hmm. And the first thing that happened was that we sold the big house -- or, my mother did.

MF: And where was that?

BL: On Linden Avenue -- 2405 - a huge house. 17 rooms. And, we had all kinds of help. And --

MF: So L-I-N-D-E-N?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: 17 rooms? (laughter)

BL: Oh forget that. For God's sake -- what it was - -

MF: Big.

BL: It's still big. It's a church.

MF: And what part of town is that in? What neighborhood?

BL: Druid Park.

MF: Druid Park. So, they were established?

BL: Very well.

MF: In the home.

BL: Very well.

MF: And then what happened? Mom sold the house?

BL: We moved down the street to a smaller house, which was still a substantial house. Everything after this was down.

MF: Yes.

BL: (laughter)

MF: In Druid Park though?

BL: Yes. We lived originally at the 2400 block. But we moved to the 2200 block. And, my grandmother came to live with us. Her husband had died.

MF: And that was -- Grandmother?

BL: Jaffee. We had little or no relationship with my father's family. There were legal battles. And, my mother turned her head away.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, I think, in all fairness, she was glad to have a reason. They didn't -- um, I think my father was different than his family. He had not lived in a ghetto. And, my mother never had. And, coming from Salem, West Virginia -- and with two -- three very aggressive brothers who were education-oriented -- and who were -- a lovely, wonderful woman. If you can imagine a 6-feet tall handsome, Jewish lady - who always wore a black dress with a white lace collar. So, it was not a congenial family situation with my father's family.

MF: Right.

BL: Between my father's family and my mother's.

MF: And then, obviously, he left her in a situation, financially?

BL: Pretty sound.

MF: That was comfortable.

BL: Comfortable.

MF: So, your mom did work? Or didn't work?

BL: Mmm mmm. [no]

__: [pause]

BL: My mother drove a car early on. I never remember her not driving a car. I never remember her not smoking. I never remember her not being well-dressed.

MF: So the neighborhood that you grew up in -- was it that neighborhood?

BL: No. After awhile my mother and my grandmother wanted to move out of what was then called "The City". And we moved just - I don't know whether you'd call it Forest Park, or Winter Hills. It was on the border. Bateman Avenue. Bateman and Hilton. And that was a very nice -- I won't say upper-middle class. But I would say, middle, middle class neighborhood. Still is. Black.

MF: And Hilton?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: So it was a middle-class - upper?

BL: Upper. I would say upper.

MF: Primarily Jewish?

BL: Mixed. That was what they -- it soon became unmixed -- but, when we moved in, it was still mixed.

MF: And, what was the address of that house -- do you remember?
Or the street you were on?

BL: We were at Hilton - -Hilton and Bateman.

MF: All right. What was that house like?

BL: It was decent. Oh, I must tell you -- that at that point, my mother re-married. That was another -- no, she didn't remarry when we moved. She subsequently got married when I was almost 13. And she married Arthur Fineman.

MF: Is that F-

BL: I-N-E-M-A-N.

MF: OK.

BL: And it was considered a really nice family. He was a very sweet man.

MF: What was that like for you and your sister?

BL: It was fine.

MF: What's your sister's name?

BL: Shirley Hecht. And she lives in this building?

MF: H-E-C-H--?

BL: T. Like the stores.

MF: So that was a fairly comfortable?

BL: Yes, the family was very welcoming. Arthur Fineman was the brother of the woman who had married my favorite uncle. In other words, it was family to begin with. And they had -- it was a perfectly naturally kind of an event -- because they'd known each other and --

MF: Yes. But up to that point -- for the 13 years of your life -- you all had been -- you had lived in a women's home. Right?

BL: Oh, for only 8 years.

MF: 8 years?

BL: Because my father died when I was five.

MF: Right. Right. But you were used to grandma and mom and --

BL: And a housekeeper and a sister.

MF: Yes. Yes. So tell me a little bit before Arthur came into your life. What was daily life like? Where did you go to school?

BL: I went to public school. In a good neighborhood -- with good teachers.

MF: Name of the school?

BL: #64. And I still have very, very close friends who went to school with me.

MF: And that was grade school?

BL: Mmm hmm. I mean, I'm talking about really close friends.

MF: Yes. So what was a typical day like when you were a little girl? Who got you up in the morning - -and made breakfast -- and --

BL: Probably the housekeeper.

MF: Was it a Black housekeeper?

BL: White.

MF: A White lady? Do you remember -- was she --?

BL: We had a succession of Czechs. All of the same family.

MF: Yes? So, young Czech women?

BL: Mmm hmm. I don't know. And then, I walked to school with my friends. And we came home for lunch. A car came and got us -- because it was a 6 or a 7 block walk.

MF: Were there other domestic workers at the house, besides a housekeeper?

BL: Mmm hmm. [Yes]

MF: So, what kind of staff was there?

BL: Just a cleaner.

MF: A driver?

BL: No. My mother drove.

MF: Your mother drove.

BL: And, everybody else's mother drove.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, I guess they arranged a shift.

MF: So, what other kind of help at home?

BL: We had a Black woman who stayed for 37 years. And, she was a member of the family. And, when she got too old to work, her niece came and worked.

MF: What was her name?

BL: Marie was the original.

MF: Do you remember her last name?

BL: Yes. Sure. Marie Hall.

MF: H-A-L-L.

BL: And, her niece worked for me from the time I got married -- until 7 years ago.

MF: So that would be from what year to what year?

BL: From 1941 -- well, not during the War. But, she took time off when she had her babies. But, she essentially was part -- I mean these people were part of our family. And, they had an interesting history -- because they were house slaves, in a home in Elkridge. And the church -- they still -- that family still attends the church.

MF: Elkdridge, MD. How do you spell that?

BL: E-L-K-R-I-D-G-E.

MF: And, they still --

BL: Go there.

MF: So, that was Marie's family?

BL: And her niece is --

MF: What's her name?

BL: Frances TABBS.

MF: T-A-B-S?

BL: B -- Two B's. And the uncle was this handsome, gorgeous man -
- was the runner for the Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust
Company. By that, if you needed a document, he brought it.

MF: Yes.

BL: This was an exceptional family.

MF: How did Marie come to your family?

BL: I don't know - -she worked so long for us -- I don't know.

MF: So what did the Czech girls do, versus what Marie did?

BL: Well, after we grew up, we didn't have Czech girls.

MF: OK. So then you Marie came to you?

BL: Yes.

MF: Now, did she do the cooking?

BL: Not while my grandmother was alive. Because my grandmother
watched her. I mean, she supervised the kosher.

MF: So she kept a kosher home.

BL: Oh yes. I didn't -- my mother and grandmother did. And we
belonged to Beth Tfiloh. And I went to Hebrew School.

MF: Tell me a little bit more about the foods -- because I am interested in that too. Did your grandmother supervise and do most of the cooking?

BL: She didn't do any of it.

MF: She supervised.

BL: Always with that black dress, and the white lace collar.

MF: So she just --

BL: She just supervised.

MF: She supervised Marie --

BL: And, my mother. My mother was a good cook. And, a superb baker. My mother was very typical of her -- her kind.

MF: How so?

BL: Well, these were aspiring women who had leisure time.

MF: What about cooking? Was she--

BL: What about what?

MF: Cooking. Did she show you all how to cook? Or involve you all in any way in the kitchen?

BL: We weren't permitted. (laughter)

MF: So, how was Marie at keeping a kosher kitchen?

BL: She did.

MF: She knew all the rules?

BL: You bet. My mother had beautiful china and beautiful silver. That was very typical of these women - -that category of women. There was a lot of new wealth. We didn't have new wealth -- but, her peers did.

MF: Yes. So you don't remember ever, kind of financial problems?

BL: Oh, there was always financial problems during the Depression -
- but, everybody had them.

MF: Right.

BL: And, we didn't - we didn't step down.

MF: And then your mom re-married.

BL: And my uncles became enormously successful -- two of them.

MF: What were they doing?

BL: Well, one - -and they were enabled to begin their success -
because they could borrow money from my mother. So there
was an obligation there.

MF: OK.

BL: Because she had inherited some wealth.

MF: Yes. So what was their business?

BL: Well, the most successful uncle was a man who -- who changed
his name to Joffe from Jaffee. And, he had clothing stores --all
over the country.

MF: What was his first name?

BL: A.B. Joffe.

MF: A.B.?

BL: Yes. And it was -- he's a great benefactor to the Yeshiva
University.

MF: Is it J-O-F-F-E?

BL: Uh-huh,

MF: And, is it A (period) B. (period)?

BL: Mmm hmm. It was Albert Bernard - -but, he called himself --
they always called him "A.B.".

MF: And so, his business was clothing?

BL: It was called "One Price Only" -- OPO. And he sold it. Well, he's been dead for 15 years or more. But he was really a great benefactor. He left millions to Israel.

MF: To Hebrew University?

BL: To Yeshiva in New York. And to some Joffe Fund in Israel. One of his daughters lives there. He was very rich.

MF: Yes. Where did he live?

BL: He lived in New York.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, my other uncle -- well, they all were successful -- but these two were particularly so. He lived in -- he took that little store in Salem, West Virginia. He went back to Salem. And from it, he bought stores all over -- up and down that area. And they ultimately became junior department stores.

MF: What was his name?

BL: His name was Max Jaffee. He didn't change it. Apparently when my uncle went to New York -- there was another Jaffee. And so, he wanted to distinguish himself.

MF: Right. And so, those brothers were always supportive of your mom.

BL: If there was an emergency.

MF: Right.

BL: And there were some, certainly. But nothing real -- you know, I went to summer camp -- how did we --

MF: Where did you go to summer camp?

BL: I went to summer camp in Narrowsburg, New York. A camp now, that is a child welfare -- not welfare -- a child study association camp.

MF: What was it called?

BL: It was called "Utopia". And the woman who owned it was my grandmother's first cousin -- Laura Lebow and she was a figure in Child Study Association of America. When she died she left the camp to them.

MF: Is it L-E-B-O?

BL: W.

MF: B-O-W.

BL: But she was unimportant, really.

MF: But the camp -- what kind of camp was it?

BL: It's an athletic camp. Two months.

MF: Regular summer camp?

BL: Summer camp.

MF: Ok. For Jewish kids? Or --

BL: It was all Jewish.

MF: All Jewish.

BL: It was not kosher, but they were all Jewish kids. I don't think they had any pork or anything like that.

MF: Yes. How long did you go there? For how many years?

BL: From the time I was 7 until I was 16 -- with one summer off -- when we all went to California.

MF: Did you think about attending Baltimore-area camps? Always went to --

BL: You got it wrong, kid.

MF: Right.

BL: (laughter)

MF: You always went away. Right.

BL: My cousins all went there.

MF: OK.

BL: So, it was a time for the girl cousins to be together.

MF: OK.

BL: And, it was family-owned.

MF: Right. So, your extended family in Baltimore, outside your household -- any --

BL: Well, I married into a very extended family.

MF: Before -- when you were in --

BL: I don't know.

MF: Just that family. So, tell me about after -- when Arthur came into the family? Things were all pretty much the same?

BL: Pretty much the same.

MF: What kind of a living did he have? What was his occupation?

BL: He worked with his father -- and it was an embroidery business. Commercial embroidery. And, they were an old family. They were of Eastern European background -- but, they were family that had come -- even his mother was born in Baltimore.

MF: What's his name again?

BL: Arthur Fineman.

MF: Right. So, the embroidery business?

BL: Yes. Now, look, he came when I was 13. I went to college when I was 17. So it was -- I didn't go off to college. But my life -

-

MF: You went to Goucher?

BL: Yes.

MF: Tell me about Beth Tefiloh?"

BL: That was a very important part of my life.

MF: Tell me about that. How so?

BL: Well, I loved the history. I went to Baltimore Hebrew College after -- while I was in High School. I went at night. I was there when Louis Kaplan came.

MF: And how old were you when you started attending Baltimore Hebrew?

BL: Probably 13 -- 14.

MF: And, how many nights would you go?

BL: Two nights a week.

MF: What did you study?

BL: Mostly history and Hebrew Literature, and -- it was a wonderful experience. I took the streetcar down.

MF: But you'd also -- I think you'd said to me that you had Hebrew after school.

BL: I went to Hebrew School.

MF: After school?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: From what age to when?

BL: Oh, always.

MF: Always Hebrew School. And, how many days a week was that?

BL: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons -- and, Sunday 'til 1:00 o'clock.

MF: And Beth Tfiloh. What kind of synagogue was it? Orthodox or Conservative.

BL: Well, it was Orthodox, but it wasn't extreme Orthodox.

MF: So a Conservadox?

BL: Well --

MF: Mild Orthodox?

BL: Mild Orthodox.

MF: But your family was very involved?

BL: In the Sisterhood and --

MF: Your mother and your grandmother?

BL: Uh-huh.

MF: So Beatty, what did that mean to you? What was your connection, besides--?

BL: That was my life. I didn't -- give much thought to it. It was a quiet, dignified life. We traveled -- we went away a lot, because we visited my uncles all the time. One lived outside of Pittsburgh, and one lived in New York. And, particularly, the New York uncle -- felt very responsible for these two fatherless children. We had a lot of uncles in our life.

MF: Now, when you were growing up -- was Beth Tefiloh mainly your social world? Or, what about school? Public school versus Tefiloh -- or, was it a combination?

BL: It was a combination.

MF: But were your friends at school, mainly Jewish kids?

BL: Yes, yes. In the elementary school.

MF: How would you characterize -- I guess what I'm trying to understand is -- was your world as a child predominately Jewish, socially, culturally?

BL: As a young child.

MF: As a young child.

BL: And these changes took place afterwards.

MF: Tell me about that.

BL: Well, when I -- first of all, I left my little world, because I went to #49, which was downtown.

MF: And was that for high school?

BL: For junior high.

MF: Ok.

BL: It was an accelerated school -- three years and two. I don't know what the hurry was -- but, you were thought to be exceptional.

MF: What was that like?

BL: Loved it.

MF: How come?

BL: But it changed my social world. Because there were other kinds of Jewish kids there.

MF: Ok.

BL: And, there were kids that belonged to Temples, and there were kids who belonged to churches. And there was suddenly this healthy mixture of people - -much more realistic than what I'd been brought up in. And, I think I was an early maturer. I don't want to be self-important when I say this - but, I think I recognized, very quickly, that there were alternatives to Orthodoxy.

MF: Yes.

BL: Now, I want to say two things that I have reflected on recently. One is that the death of my father -- while it was a tragedy,

probably unleashed some freedoms in my whole life that I might never have had. Some restrictions. Some liberties. Some independence -- that wouldn't have been possible with a strong-willed father. And, I have to assume he was.

MF: So, talk about that a little bit more. What kind of freedoms?

BL: Well, I made friends outside of my little community. And, they were non-observant. And, Ford's Theater was our Mecca. I think we discovered the theater. And you went on Saturday matinee. Which meant that I had to ride a streetcar downtown. Which meant that I was buying my lunch at Huylers -- and Read's drugstore. And, --

MF: How do you spell Huylers?

BL: H-U-Y-L-E-R-S. We did that on birthdays. That was special.

MF: Huylers and Read's?

BL: Normally, we'd go up to Read's Drugstore on the second floor. And you'd go to Hutzler's basement, or whatever.

MF: Yes.

BL: But we were in town on Saturdays. And I was riding a streetcar. And, I was doing all these terrible things that I might never have been able to do. And I was making friends outside of my neighborhood.

MF: But did it all happen really after the junior -- or because of the junior classmates?

BL: Oh, of course. Of course. It wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

MF: Right.

BL: I wouldn't have known the people. And a little boy/girl crowd developed. Do you want some water?

MF: No, I'm good.

__: [pause in tape]

MF: Sure. I will take one. Thanks.

BL: And, something else happened. We used to go to the Carlin's Ice Rink.

MF: Carlin's?

BL: Carlin's Park.

MF: How do you spell that?

BL: C-A-R-L-I-N -- with an apostrophe "s". They had an ice rink, and we all went on Sunday afternoon. And shopped. Shall I say this? My friends were very beautiful. It just happened. Some crowds -- some groups. And so, there were always lots of Christian boys. And, the German-Jewish boys. And so, we got to know each other in a very informal way. And, never told our parents we skated with the non-Jews. Had a very -- I think -- a very good childhood, and adolescence. I don't think back upon it with --

MF: Negative?

BL: Negatively -- not really at all. My mother was very hospitable and very warm. And, very eager to have my friends come to our house.

MF: What do you think--

BL: And then, I went to Western High School.

MF: And, where was that?

BL: That was at Gwynn's Falls. And, Mondawmin Avenue.

MF: Can you spell those for me?

BL: G-W-Y-N-N -- apostrophe "s" -- Falls Road. And, Mondawmin --
M-O-N-D-A-W-M-I-N.

MF: What part of town is that in?

BL: What part of town? If you went right down Park Heights Avenue -
- which is the major street -- it converges into Reisterstown
Road, and it's central - -call it central - -but not downtown.

MF: OK.

BL: It's now a black colored high school. And there, I think I
emerged there really.

MF: How so?

BL: Well, I was very active in the school. I joined a sorority. I met
all kinds of people. It was a Depression time. So that some
Christians who had been at private school had to come to public
school. And I got to know them. I got invited to Christmas
parties -- which I went to. And so, I didn't have this feeling that it
was "they" and "us". Now, I must admit that I wasn't invited to
their debutante parties. But, one Christian family, particularly,
was very welcoming. And we were - Elizabeth Pfeiffer and I
were close until we graduated from high school. And then, she
went on to Cornell. And, I'd see her vacations.

MF: Ok. She was a Christian?

BL: Very.

MF: And, what was her name?

BL: Pfeiffer. Elizabeth Pfeiffer.

MF: How do you spell that?

BL: P-F-E-I-F-F-E-R.

MF: Well, tell me a little bit more about the division between the temple Jews and the -- you know, Jews that you had really grown up with? Were --

BL: There was no division.

MF: No division?

BL: Not -- not once I knew them. Even some of the people in our neighborhood. It was a very upwardly bound kind of people. These were the people -- I grew up with the people who were the merchant class. The people who manufactured shirts. The people who manufactured blue jeans -- well they weren't blue -- workmen's clothes. The people who -- they were all manufacturer's children.

MF: Right.

BL: And they were making money.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, they were changing their way of life. The Woodholme Country Club was established. And, they were the founding members -- these people that I grew up with.

MF: How do you spell that - Woodholme?

BL: W-O-O-D-H-O-L-M-E.

MF: And, where was that?

BL: That's out here. We did not join. But, my friends all belonged, and I went out there. And I was a fairly decent tennis player.

MF: Was it a Jewish club?

BL: A Jewish club. It was the second Jewish club -- the first one --

MF: How come you didn't join?

BL: Well, I don't think my step-father was athletic.

MF: Right.

BL: He wasn't interested in golf and -- and I think my mother would have loved it.

MF: Yes. And so, the German-Jews - -they were primarily in -- so, they weren't the merchant class - they were --

BL: Department stores. And some were the merchants. My husband's family made athletic gear. We'll get to that later.

MF: Let me ask you kind of an aside. Where did you all shop? Both for food, and for clothes, and for --

BL: Well, as long as my grandmother was alive -- my mother and my grandmother, in their chauffeur-driven car would go down to Lombard Street to buy chickens.

MF: (laughter)

BL: She was a different. We were different people -- even if we weren't, we thought we were.

MF: Yes.

BL: Am I saying it right?

MF: Yes.

BL: Always refused to be lumped in.

MF: So, what would she take you to do in the City -- in New York?

BL: Whatever we could do.

MF: And she was at 86th and --

BL: Central Park West.

MF: What an address. That's great. So, you started going up there at what age?

BL: Thirteen.

MF: How would you get there?

BL: Train.

MF: By yourself?

BL: Sure. Maybe before that, I used to go up to visit my uncle, all the time, with my grandmother.

MF: But, did your mom and your grandmother just decide it was the right -- why did she have to go to New York?

BL: Well, it was wrong for her to spend so much time with a newly-wed, newly-married couple. She was intelligent enough to realize that that was really the wrong thing to do. That --

MF: Right.

BL: That my stepfather had enough adjustments marrying somebody with two children. But, to have a mother-in-law?

MF: Right.

BL: And so, she would come for long visits over every holiday. Because she was a good friend of my stepfather's mother. They were good buddies.

MF: Back to the shopping bit. So you'd go down to --

BL: That's the only -- the clothes shopping. The clothes-shopping was always done -- my mother did a lot of sewing, as I told you. So I don't remember any childhood clothes-shopping -- other than shoes. We went to Hess's. I'm sure there was some. But I don't -- I don't recall. I'm sure it was bought for me, and I didn't participate. And then, once I was older. My mother's closest friend -- friends -- were two women who owned a very well-known dress shop in Baltimore called "Jeannette Becks " And so, I would always get my clothes there, on sale, when the sales came. They would put things away for me -- if my mother didn't

make them. Oh remember, my uncle had department stores. We'd go out there and fill up. But his clothes weren't good enough for my mother. I mean, the underwear and stockings, and you know. But --

MF: She liked clothes from the department stores?

BL: From the fancy shops. (laughter)

MF: In New York or -- So, did you buy a lot of clothes in New York - in the city?

BL: Not for me.

MF: For her.

BL: Well, Il dressed just like everybody else. As long as she could afford it.

MF: So tell me -- let's skip back - -well, one thing that I wanted to ask you -- was about -- Jewish butchers. Well, you got the chickens from down on Lombard Street area.

BL: That's all I remember.

MF: What about bakeries?

BL: Silber's.

MF: Silber's?

BL: Remember my mother baked her own baked goods.

MF: The challah, pump, rye -- that kind of thing?

BL: Came from Silber's.

MF: And then, what about traditional Jewish cooking in the house? As far as holidays? Holiday meals and Shabbat? What happened?

BL: We had chicken on Friday night.

MF: Tell me, what else did you have? What happened on Friday nights?

BL: You know, we had prayers and -- holidays were always spent with the uncles -- one or the other -- coming and going. And remember they were religious. Or one was.

MF: Did they marry?

BL: Married well. Everything was upscale, my dear.

MF: So can you --

BL: They married lovely, lovely women. All three of them.

MF: Yes.

BL: All well-educated women.

MF: German or ?

BL: No. Old Eastern European families.

MF: So, what were --?

BL: My religious uncle married someone who'd graduated from Barnard. My step-father's sister was a teacher who'd gone to Towson Normal School and she was married to one of my uncles.

MF: Great.

BL: They were all quality people.

MF: What do you remember about the holiday meals?

BL: They were sumptuous.

MF: What was Rosh Hashonah like?

BL: I don't know, dear. I really don't. Passover was you know -- they were all just elaborate meals. Food was very important.

MF: At the traditional --

BL: Nothing was spared.

MF: Traditional kind of dishes?

BL: Yes. But not peasantry.

MF: So, what's peasantry?

BL: Well I -- you know, it wasn't seltzer bottles on the table. God knows. It was good crystal and china. I've still got my mother's china.

MF: And main courses -- would that be more like a roast or turkey or a goose, or something?

BL: Oh, a lot of goose. All of it. You know -- anything that they could --

MF: Right.

BL: We ate well.

MF: But, just one more question about that -- things like tzimmes, kugels, those kind of dishes? Those are the peasantry things that you are thinking of? OK. But matzo ball soup?

BL: Mmm hmm. And, a sweet and sour borscht - -which I still make.

MF: Mmm. That sounds wonderful.

BL: My grandfather came from Moldova which was Rumania, really. So, I think my grandmother had some of those dishes. We always had a lot of sweet and soured tongue.

MF: Yes.

BL: And sweetbreads on Saturday for lunch. Sweet breads and - - and mushrooms on toast.

MF: See, you remember.

BL: We lived very typically -- I don't know how my friends lived. I mean, this was -- I didn't feel it was unique is what I am trying to

say. It's the way we all lived. We'd go into their houses.

Everybody had servants.

MF: Where did Passover supplies come from?

BL: Well, frequently, we went to Lakewood for Passover when I was young.

MF: And, what was that?

BL: There was a Jewish hotel where the family would all gather together.

MF: Where was it?

BL: New Jersey. This was before my mother was married.

MF: OK.

BL: And then, we just had big -- big Seders. Because my father's family. My step-father's family.

MF: And did he continue -- was he involved in Beth Tefilah, too?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: So, where did we get up to? We got up to where you're heading off to Goucher, after Western?

BL: No, there's --

MF: Well, we didn't talk too much about dating though. What about seeing boys when you were in high school?

BL: There was a lot of them. (laughter)

MF: So, how did that work?

BL: Well, I belonged to a sorority.

MF: Was it a Jewish Sorority?

BL: Yes. Called Sigma Theta Phi.

MF: So, you belonged to the Jewish Sorority in high school?

BL: Sigma Theta Phi.

MF: Mmm hmm.

BL: And there is a corresponding boys' fraternity. And you'll remember -- we were all such snobs. You have to understand that. It's -- you know teenagers are like that. I know a lot about teenagers -- having had a teenage business. But -- when I think back upon it -- I think about the resentment that those of us must have caused with the in-group. And we had a wonderful time. Just wonderful.

MF: So, what kinds of things would you all do together?

BL: Oh, there was constant parties, and there was constant going to the movies, and going to Nate's and Leon's and meeting there. And, we had a discussion group. And, we did social service work. I mean, it was all good things - for those that were in it. And many of those women who were part of that sorority are indeed now in the Jewish leadership of the city. There's no question. On the other hand, we thought of ourselves as the elite. And I guess we still do.

MF: That's ok.

BL: We had more opportunities. Life was easier. We weren't -- we were privileged. Our parents all had immigrant backgrounds; so therefore, they wanted to do everything for their children.

MF: I mean was there -- even though you all had that kind of a good feeling about your group -- was there another group that saw themselves positioned higher than you all, or were you --

BL: Only the German Jewish.

MF: Ok. That's what I kind of wondered.

BL: But the boys - -because of the nature of my little circle -- were always hovering around.

MF: Right. And then, how did dating work within that crowd?

BL: We dated. (laughter) If you didn't have a date on Saturday night, you might as well --

MF: When did you start dating?

BL: I had my first real date when I was 14. When a boy came and picked me up in the car. And took me someplace.

MF: What'd you do?

BL: We went to some dance or something. It was a real date.

MF: Did you date a lot -- all through high school, and junior high?

BL: Not junior high -- high school.

MF: High school.

BL: Dated.

MF: Steady or -- Anybody special?

BL: Lots. (laughter)

MF: Wow. But those were good experiences?

BL: Yes. You know, it was an age of innocence. All the problems that my granddaughter had -- has had -- were not present.

MF: Ever date non-Jewish boys?

BL: Not until -- no. I didn't. No. I didn't. One the junior high school thing stopped where the group was sort of mixed -- no, I didn't. Some of my friends did. I think I didn't, because nobody asked me. I would have, I think.

MF: How did your mother feel about the freedoms that you had - -like regarding Shabbos, and you know --

BL: My mother didn't care -- you see? I mean, she'd married two men who cared about keeping the kosher. The first one was Orthodox. Arthur Fineman was not Orthodox at all. He ate not treyfe food. You know, my mother ate crabs, but, not in the house. My mother kept the house kosher for her in-laws. For her mother, and for her mother-in-law, and not for herself.

MF: So, where would she go to eat crabs?

BL: Wherever they were.

MF: Did you all have a house - -a summer house, or a cottage or anything?

BL: No. No. Mmm mm. We weren't that wealthy.

MF: Right.

BL: We weren't wealthy. We were comfortable. But a lot of my friends -- that was an era when they were making money, and enlarging their lives.

MF: So, going to the beach -- was that part of your experience?

BL: Oh yes, we went to Atlantic City. We went to Long Beach in Long Island, New York.

MF: So how did --

BL: I don't want to put my mother down. I mean she was reaching out.

MF: Right.

BL: And, she encouraged us to go to the Symphony. She encouraged us to go to the theater. We went to the Peabody and had music lessons. We had it all -- whatever was around, we had.

MF: So, how did you make a decision about college?

BL: I had no choice. We didn't have enough money for me to go away. You know, it was the bottom of the Depression.

MF: Yes. What year did you go to Goucher?

BL: '36.

MF: Did you live there?

BL: No.

MF: So you lived at?

BL: Home.

MF: So tell me about your Goucher years.

BL: They weren't as good as my high school years academically -- because Goucher was not that good. And, I'd been in the A-course at Western, and I was good. And my classmates were smart. And it was challenging. When I got to Goucher, it was a big disappointment. Goucher was not a good school in those days. Though they thought they were.

MF: And, you were also going there with a good, Jewish education, right?

BL: Yes. I'd gone to Baltimore Hebrew College.

MF: Yes, yes.

BL: I always was always intellectually curious. So, I'd spend a lot of time in the library. I read well. I read a lot.

MF: So, what was your course of study there?

BL: I majored in political science. Now, I had a boyfriend that I'd met at camp -- he had been a camp counselor--- that I met when I was 15. And, while I didn't have a steady boyfriend here -- when I went to New York -- I always saw him. And, he was a great intellectual. And, ended up teaching at Princeton. And, he was

a very strong influence on my intellectual life certainly. He introduced me to --

MF: What was his name?

BL: Hutner. H-U-T-N-E-R. He introduced me to all kinds of ideas that I might not -- at that age -- at 15 or 16 - might not have been exposed to.

MF: So what --

BL: And, in a sense, I left my friends at a certain point in my life.

MF: Yes.

BL: Because I -- I don't want to say this in an arrogant way -- but, I had more interest in books, and ideas than most of them did. They were bright, certainly. And, I did make some good relationships with faculty at Goucher.

MF: Anybody in particular?

BL: No. But I really had -- by the time that I got to Goucher, I was dating boys at Hopkins who were taking me to classes. And I think I wouldn't have known how poor Goucher was if I hadn't been exposed to what they were being exposed to at Hopkins which was vastly different.

MF: Did you stay four years at Goucher?

BL: Mmm hmm. [Yes]

MF: So, you graduated in?

BL: '40.

MF: And then, what was your plan, after school? What were you aiming towards, when you were at school?

BL: I was aiming to get a job in publications. And, I don't know whether you wanted -- I thought we were not going to talk about me. Now, why were -- we're ending up talking about me.

MF: That's the -- well, of course, we talk about you. But you talk about whatever you want. So, if you don't think I'm asking you something that you want to talk about -- you switch.

BL: Well, I don't want to talk about the fact that I felt different from other people. Or that I felt more mentally energetic than my friends. I won't say brighter.

MF: Right.

BL: Because I don't think that's accurate.

MF: Well, you sound like you were really curious.

BL: I was really curious.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, I still am really curious.

MF: Yes, so you had a thirst for knowledge and for ideas?
Education?

BL: Right.

MF: And you sought it out.

BL: Now when I graduated -- right before I graduated from college -- I had submitted some work that I had done, and some ideas to *Vogue Magazine*. And, I was called for an interview. And, then I was called for a second interview. And --

MF: Let's see -- *Vogue Magazine*.

BL: *Vogue*.

MF: *Vogue*?

BL: V-O-G-U-E.

MF: Oh.

BL: And after the second interview I met this -- my friend - my New York beau -- and, I was feeling very hot. And, I sort of fainted. And, you know, I just assumed it was all this excitement. I mean, can you imagine getting a job on *Vogue Magazine*? At that point, that was really something special. And, they hadn't given me the job - -but, they said that it looked good. You know, what it was, was that I had come down with typhoid fever. So, I spent the next 10 weeks at Sinai Hospital with typhoid. So, I didn't actually graduate until the Class of '41. But I was the Class of '40. And, of course, I didn't get the job at *Vogue*.

MF: What kind of a piece was it for *Vogue*?

BL: It was - the idea to insert - I had been an editor of the college literary magazine called "Kalends" -- And, I had this idea that in *Vogue* put in an insert for college students, into the literary magazines of all of the colleges, that it would be a tremendous promotion for them.

MF: Mmm hmm. So you recovered?

BL: Slowly. And when I was real sick, Dr. Elliot Levi who just died, was a resident. And, he called on all his friends and relatives and told them that -- well, everybody knew that I -- everybody knew the story. It was just like it galloped through the community. And, I needed blood transfusions, a lot. And, one of the people who offered was my to-be husband. And so, when I was well enough -- he kept calling to inquire. Among other people. I mean here's this young woman about to get a job on *Vogue* and was about to graduate -- and, gets typhoid fever. Whoever

heard of getting typhoid fever in this day and age? In that day and age? It was wiped out.

MF: How did you get it?

BL: Because Marie was sick. And, she got a friend to come. She had a hysterectomy. She got a friend to come to cook. Her friend was a "Typhoid Mary." She didn't know it. Nobody else in our family got it -- I got it. In any case, I couldn't have gone to New York to work. And, then I met my husband, and we decided to get married and --

MF: And, what was his name?

BL: Joseph Levi. L-E-V-I. And, he was from one of these old German-Jewish families.

MF: So you met him when?

BL: '40.

MF: And when did you get married?

BL: '41.

MF: In Baltimore.

BL: Mmm hmm. [Yes]

MF: Tell me about that. Tell me your courtship, and dating him - - what was that like?

BL: It was very different, because he was 9 and half years older than I was. And he already had an established social life. And, he'd come from another world. And he knew all the names of all the waiters at the Belvedere. And you know, it was a whole different shtick.

MF: What was the Belvedere?

BL: It was a hotel, and a bar that everybody went to. I mean, I use that as a --

MF: Right.

BL: You know, it was just a whole --

MF: Right.

BL: A generation away.

MF: Had you ever met him?

BL: No. Never even knew he existed.

MF: And where did he go to Temple?

BL: At Oheb?

MF: Oheb?

BL: Shalom.

MF: What did his family do?

BL: What do you mean what did they do? Oh, they made midi blouses, and athletic equipment -- oh gym shorts and --

MF: Athletic wear?

BL: Mmm hmm. And, he worked for a department store in Washington -- S. Kann (sp?) -- And he'd gone to Park School -- which is a private Jewish - was then, Jewish school. Nobody's told you about Park School?

MF: Yes, I've heard a little bit about it. He worked for S. Kann -- K-A-H-N ? In D.C.?

BL: K-A-N-N.

MF: And what did you like about him?

BL: I was crazy about him. He was bright. He was charming. He was witty. He's still quoted. He was fun.

MF: And how did you all meet?

BL: I told you.

MF: Through the Dr. Elliot Levi --

BL: No, through my brother-in-law -- well, he'd been a camp counselor of my brother-in-law.

MF: OK.

BL: And, my brother-in-law --they weren't married. But, Louis was dating Shirley all that time.

MF: So you dated for?

BL: Six months.

MF: And, how did he ask you to marry him?

BL: I don't think he ever did. I think we just assumed we would. You know, I think it was at that point that --

MF: How old were you?

BL: When I got married, I was 21 -- almost 22.

MF: And he was close to 30?

BL: He was 30.

MF: He was 30. So, where'd you get married?

BL: At the Belvedere Hotel -- a fancy wedding.

MF: And where was the Belvedere?

BL: Downtown.

MF: Did you have a Rabbi?

BL: Two.

MF: Who were they?

BL: Oheb Shalom and Beth Tefiloh.

MF: And what was the ceremony like?

BL: We had a chupa, bridesmaids, and ushers and flowers and -- whatever.

MF: The whole shtick?

BL: Yes.

MF: Big meal? Or reception or --

BL: A dinner for the family -- which is a big family. Because his was big and mine was big. And they came from all over. And, a reception and dance, first.

MF: What time of the year was this?

BL: June.

MF: So was that process of planning the wedding a good one?

BL: I don't remember. I'm sure my mother did it all.

MF: That wasn't a big deal for you?

BL: Mmm hmm. Mmm mmm. Not at all.

MF: Just wanted to get through it?

BL: Yes. But I'm sure she wanted -- and, I think she wanted it a certain way, because of the German-Jewish thing.

MF: Right.

BL: Because she did not want these three people to think that she was, in any way, less.

MF: Right.

BL: She wanted to show off her family.

END OF CD 1

BL... a wonderful, well-educated, cosmopolitan, wonderful woman --

MF: Your husband's?

BL: Mother.

MF: Mother. Can we just say for the mike that this is our second disk with Beatty Levi on February the 4th, 2002? OK.

BL: I have great admiration for her.

MF: And what was her name?

BL: Her name was Juliette Meyer Levi.

MF: M-E-Y-E-R?

BL: M-E-Y-E-R.

MF: Why did you admire her?

BL: Well she had been born to really great wealth. Old, German-Jewish Washington family. She'd gone to the first kindergarten in the United States, established by Teddy Roosevelt's wife. She'd gone to finishing school in Switzerland. She'd never known anything but real wealth. Depression hit her very hard. Very. She kept her dignity. And she did things she never thought she'd ever do. And, --

MF: Like?

BL: Like being without household help, except maybe cleaning help. Like buying clothes, or not buying clothes. I think she'd briefly got out of the Suburban Club, which must have been hard for her -- because all her friends were there. She stayed in the Phoenix Club -- which was a downtown club. I don't know all the sacrifices she made -- I wasn't there. But, she made them.

MF: What's the Phoenix Club?

BL: It's a downtown Jewish club -- the equivalent of - that was a real German-Jewish citadel. Suburban Club took you in if you had enough money. They took a few. But not the Phoenix Club. Girls made their debut.

MF: Yes.

BL: It was a vertical society - -they thought they were the equivalent of the WASP society -- whatever the WASP's did, they did.

MF: For the Suburban Club?

BL: Not the Suburban, the Phoenix.

MF: OK. So what was it like for you being -- when you entered that family?

BL: It wasn't any -- there was no problem. I was engaging. I was lively. I was a good athlete. Good enough -- I don't mean that I was a champion. I had gone to Goucher. I knew people. I was completely acceptable.

MF: How much time did you all spend with his family?

BL: Oh, a lot. With my mother-in-law. We lived in the same building. We moved into the Marlborough.

MF: Ok, so after you got married?

BL: We moved in -- not into her apartment, but into the building. And she became a very good friend of my mother's. There were no problems. They weren't visible. I shouldn't say there were no problems. But, nobody was rude. Nobody -- I mean I'd hear remarks, but, not about me.

MF: So, Juliette and her husband lived in the Marlborough?

BL: No.

MF: Just Juliette?

BL: Just Juliette. They lived in the house on Eutaw Place. And when she lost her money she moved into the Marlborough.

MF: What happened to the father?

BL: He had died.

MF: Joseph's father. So, after losing the house on Eutaw Place--

BL: She didn't lose it --

MF: After the Depression?

BL: And being a widow -- she didn't need that big house.

MF: Yes, moved from the Eutaw Place --

BL: House to an apartment house.

MF: And how long did you --

BL: And a lot of her friends lived in that apartment house.

MF: How long were you all there?

BL: Until Joe went into the service.

MF: What year was that?

BL: Oh, 1942 - late '42.

MF: What was it like living here?

BL: Well, first of all, Miss Etta Cohen lived there. And my mother-in-law played cards with her, every Saturday night. And, were friends. Not close, but good friends -- friends. And there were a lot of interesting older women that were my mother-in-law's friends, that were widowed, who were there. And I was working. I got a job at the State Department of Education working on their Annual Report -- writing it. And re-writing this dread stuff that would come in from the -- from the various principals and superintendents. Trying to clarify it for the Legislature.

MF: So, that was kind of your entry back into writing, and publishing?

BL: And political science.

MF: Yes. Was that a full-time job?

BL: Oh yes.

MF: For you -- every day? So you began that when you were how old?

BL: As soon as --

MF: In your early 20'?

BL: As soon as I was married.

MF: Right.

BL: I was then well enough to get a job. I wasn't going to sit around and twitch and twiddle my thumbs. Not that we didn't need the income -- we did.

MF: Was Joe approving of you working?

BL: Oh, absolutely. No question.

MF: So then -- tell me how did you spend time with his mom? Like on weekends? Or during the week?

BL: We'd eat together once a week-- living in the same building.

MF: Right. And then, what happened after --

BL: Then, Joe went into the Army. I moved back with my mother. And mostly, I was following Joe. So, I wasn't really -- I was there between his various situations. Until he went overseas. That's when I really came back.

MF: Back to home. So, how long were you living with your father?

BL: It could have been a year and a half -- two years.

MF: And, still working?

BL: Oh yes.

MF: How long did you work for the State Department of Education?

BL: When Joe went down to Newport News, I left. And, I got a job at—with the Service Corp, the Headquarters of the regional office was in Baltimore.

MF: The Third Service Corp (?)?

BL: Yes. That's what it was -- I think that's the name.

MF: What was the name?

BL: It was the Administrative arm of the Army. Who bought the food, and who didn't. You know -- whatever.

MF: What did you do for them?

BL: Whatever odd jobs there were -- there were always odd jobs. And then when he went overseas for the transferred me to Baltimore.

MF: So was that for how long? How many years?

BL: Until '46, I think.

MF: So, when did he get out of the service?

BL: '46.

MF: '46. And then, what did you all do after that?

BL: What did we do?

MF: When he came back, after the war.

BL: He had to look for another job. We were at loose ends for a couple of years. My step-father had a little business. And, Joe started working for him, and that was disastrous. And we were really at loose ends for a couple of years. And then, finally, Joe got a job with Cohn Rosenberg (sp?) which was a big jewelry manufacturing company --- called Coro.

MF: Can you spell it? Coro? How do you spell that?

BL: C-O-R-O. It's Cohn Rosenberg. They were the major costume jewelry manufacturers at that time. And he took a selling job. He knew them from his department store connections.

MF: So, where was he selling?

BL: All over.

MF: "Five and Dimes" -- all over the country.

BL: And, I took a lot of odd jobs -- because I was trying to get pregnant. And there was no reason for me to work very hard. Joe was earning immediately.

MF: Now were you also involved in religious life during this time?

BL: None. You've heard the end of my religious life.

MF: Was he -- he wasn't interested in that, given his background?

BL: Well, his background was mixed -- because they always had Friday night -- if that's mixed.

MF: Yes.

BL: And they went to High Holiday services. They belonged to a synagogue. And, my mother-in-law went to services fairly regularly.

MF: Would you all do Shabbat together with his family?

BL: Yes, with his sister, mostly.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, with my family.

MF: Yes.

BL: And we always had Shabbat -- that was it. Until the kids had to go to Sunday school.

MF: So when did you get pregnant, the first time?

BL: I got pregnant, and I had a miscarriage. Well, you don't have to hear all that. My first child was born in '47.

MF: Was it hard to get pregnant?

BL: I had difficulty. Not the second time - -but the first. Not hard.

MF: Yes, but not easy.

BL: It didn't just happen -- biff-bang.

MF: Right. So, 1947 was your first baby?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: And that was --

BL: Margaret.

MF: And where were you all living at that point?

BL: We moved back to the Marlborough. We got a new apartment in the Marlborough. Apartments were scarce. We were glad to get it.

MF: After the War?

BL: You bet.

MF: So, what was that first experience like for you?

BL: It was beautiful. And, she was a wonderful child, and she's a wonderful daughter. And --

MF: So, a pretty easy pregnancy and delivery for you?

BL: Mmm hmm. Very.

MF: So, was your mom involved?

BL: Everybody. (laughter)

MF: (laughter)

BL: First grandchild.

MF: So how'd you feel about motherhood, right off?

BL: I loved it. And Joe was a wonderful father. And -- they were lucky kids. They knew it.

MF: OK. So, tell me about order and names of kids. When did they -

-

BL: I only have two.

MF: OK. So, after Margaret.

BL: There's Alice. And she was born in '49. And right before she was born, we bought a house. And we lived in that house, until 1995.

MF: Wow.

BL: We added to it -- but, we lived in it all those years.

MF: Where was that?

BL: Round the corner.

MF: What's the address?

BL: 3507 Shelburne Road.

MF: Is it S-H-E-L- --

BL: B-U-R-N-E.

MF: So that neighborhood is called?

BL: Upper Park Heights.

MF: Right. And what else --

BL: And, at that time, we joined Baltimore Hebrew, because -- well Oheb Shalom wasn't built. Which was my husband's -- had it been built, we would have joined there. But this was a half a block from our house.

MF: And that's before?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: And how did you get involved there?

BL: What do you mean? I wasn't involved.

MF: Not?

BL: Not at all.

MF: Ok. So, you just were members.

BL: That's it.

MF: OK. From --

BL: But we were very friendly with the Rabbi.

MF: Who was that?

BL: Rabbi Morris Lieberman -- whose apartment we live in right now.

MF: Wow.

BL: Because my closest friend was his sister-in-law. And so we got involved. You know -- we were there. And it meant a lot. And, she was always trying to proselytize us.

MF: Yes.

BL: (laughter)

MF: Is that Lieberman -- L-I-E-B --

BL: E-R-M-A-N.

MF: OK. So, were you a stay-at-home-mom?

BL: Mmm hmm. But, I wasn't home.

MF: Right.

BL: I was a full-time volunteer at the League of Women Voters. I was there every day.

MF: When did that begin?

BL: Well, politics had always been my interest. And, I joined the League, as soon as I got out of college. And, I was there every day -- just about. And, I did their public relations for years and years and years.

MF: Where was that located?

BL: It kept moving.

MF: Ok. So, as soon as you had your girls though -- or, even before you were active in the League?

BL: Very much so.

MF: Why were you so active in that? Why was that so important to you? Tell me a little bit about your interests in that?

BL: Well, in "Getting out the Vote," and getting the Negroes to vote. And, re-districting the City so that they had a role. And, 1954 with Brown -- I was into it. And they were an active organization. They aren't any more, but, they were.

MF: Were there other groups that you were involved with at the same time?

BL: I did a little at the Council of Jewish Women - but it wasn't as interesting to me as -- I put my toe in it. Because I was sought out. But -- the League got their hands dirty.

MF: Yes.

BL: They were tillers in the soil.

MF: And there were a lot of Jewish women involved in the League?

BL: Well, not a lot -- but, mixed.

MF: So you didn't have any problem being in that?

BL: It was a wonderful organization at the time.

MF: Yes. So how -- did you have help in the apartment? Help at home?

BL: I lived in the house.

MF: In a house.

BL: Part-time help. You know, I mean --

MF: To help cook or anything?

BL: No. I cooked.

MF: Helped clean?

BL: Clean. And, babysitting over the weekend.

MF: What did you feel about domestic stuff? Domestic chores and cooking, and all that kind of stuff?

BL: It was my job. I did it.

MF: Did you enjoy it? Did you enjoy cooking? Child care?

BL: I loved the child care. I was really into it -- with my children, and their education. And, when you hear where they are now, you'll understand that there was a payoff.

MF: Yes. But the cooking part, in particular?

BL: Well, we ate.

MF: Yes.

BL: You know? We had lamb chops, and baked potatoes, and whatever else that was easy. So, nobody was hungry, and it was perfectly adequate. And, if I had a party, I could manage that.

MF: Right.

BL: And, we entertained a lot -- and still do.

MF: What was Joe doing at this time? Still working for....

BL: He changed jobs at one point. But he was doing the same things. And, he was away a lot.

MF: Was that a challenge for you with raising the girls? Having him away?

BL: I didn't like it. And, he didn't like it -- but it was economically -- I mean he lost his years in the -- remember, he came home from the Service -- he was 34 years old. 35. I mean - he'd lost time. And, he was a very good salesman, and he was making money. And he did what he had to do. And I did what I had to do.

MF: Tell me about other organizations. And your other volunteering -- other voluntary --- after the League?

BL: There was never anything other than the League.

MF: That was it?

BL: That was it. When I tell you I was full-time at the League --

MF: Yes.

BL: You can believe me.

MF: Yes, but I was thinking about your arts -- or how that came in -

BL: That came in --

MF: Was that another phase?

BL: Yes, that was another phase.

MF: So --

BL: But, let me tell you two things.

MF: I don't want to skip over that.

BL: Well, you're asking so many questions to get me into details that I think are relatively unimportant. When my girls went to high school, they went to Western. They'd gone to public school. Western did not -- it was 19 - it was at a period when -- there was a transition in the city from non-segregated, from segregated City Schools to non-segregated. And, there was a shortage of teachers. And, Western went on part-time. And so, I was looking for interesting things for them to do that would compensate for their -- it didn't behoove me to put them into private school, when I was so active in the League, and going to the Legislature, and talking about the need to unify the two systems. And begging for money. And so, I had to find things for them to do. And we did all sorts of things. Lois Feinblatt,

who I think was also interviewed, and I -- had this project. And I went to the Walter Art Gallery -- because it was two blocks, three blocks from where they were -- at school -- and, organized a program down there. Lois did other things. She got cooking classes, and whatever. She says it was only cooking. I think she was doing writing. Doing some writing classes also. For our children and their friends. So, I got to know the people at the Walter's. And that was one aspect. When I went to #49 - the Latin Classes used to go to the Walters Art Gallery --- to see the Roman ruins. Even though the gallery wasn't open until 9:00 o'clock -- it was only opened subsequently. And, I was in love with what I did see. And also I had that nice experience with my grandmother getting to know the art a little. So, I had some orientation -- certainly not a significant amount. And, I never took an art history course at Goucher. I'd heard how dull it was, and I avoided it. I don't know what the year was, because I can't recall. But Sue Baker, who is still a great friend of mine -- used to organize us to go to the theater in New York, on the Ladies Day Special -- which cost \$6.75 round-trip. And, we'd take our lunch. And she would always pick the theater. And about once a month -- once in 6 weeks, it was our day off. It was the delight of our lives. To get on a train and run from Penn Station, up to the theater. And, we loved those days. And there were about 10 of us that would do it -- not always the ten -- - but -- and not always the same ten. And then, one day, there was no theater for us to see. They just -- it was a fallow period on Broadway. And it was before Off-Broadway had really taken

a hold. And Sue suggested -- she was always thinking ahead that we go to MOMA. That there was an exhibition called "Sixteen American Artists". And they were the abstract expressionist painters. Now we know we were meeting in '56 -- because it was the day that Jackson Pollock died that we were meeting. So we already knew enough to know with early history, we can't think about -- because we didn't keep any records. We didn't think that this thing was going to continue. And so --

MF: Did you all have that name?

BL: Hmm? No. We just -- we were just us.

MF: OK.

BL: And, this is interesting -- see -- I think that this should be somebody's Ph.D. thesis. And, I'm perfectly serious. And so, when we came home -- being utterly confused by the abstract expressionist movement we said -- we really need to learn about this. And you go back to the fact that these were intellectually curious women -- that these were women who had leisure. And, all of us were very involved in some other activity -- whether it be working, or -- I don't think that anybody was working. But -- then, at any rate, we came back. And, again, Sue -- she doesn't get the credit that she deserves -- said that there's a young man writing art criticism. Well, we were all aware of that -- we were reading The Baltimore Sun -- and, why don't we get him to come and talk to us? And that probably was '55, or '56. No. Because -- Jackson Pollock died in '56. This was probably '54, or '55. And, we met with him.

MF: Who was that?

BL: It was Kenneth Sawyer.

MF: Kenneth Sawyer?

BL: S-A-W-Y-E-R. He was a charming young man who was a graduate student in the Writing Department at Hopkins -- who had the foresight and the understanding to learn about the Abstract Expressionist Movement. And, he would go up on Friday to this cafe, or bar, that they all met in. And, he would listen. And he would come back and write about it in The Sun. And so we became a little group. We didn't meet with him that many times. At this early juncture -- four or five times. And then, we realized that we really didn't have any Art History. And, we found out about a man who was teaching at American U, still these 10 or 12 girls, who would come over and talk to us. And, I guess that I get the credit because I put the group together.

MF: So, who was that Professor?

BL: His name was Joe Summerfeld.

MF: S-U-M-M--

BL: E-R -- And, of course, we just expanded from that. And then, of course, other people wanted -- we were meeting in each other's homes. But of course, other people heard about it that we knew -- and they became part of it. And so, we limited it to 25. And we met at the Suburban Club. We were all members of the Suburban Club -- at that point. And it just grew and grew and grew. And the more it grew, the more serious we became. Believe me -- major collections have come out of this. And, major contributions to the two Museums. And then we said --

well, you can't belong to us, unless you contribute to The Baltimore Museum, and the Walter's Art Gallery. So that brought us great credibility to the museums. I'm talking about early on. And we would get the Hopkins Art History Department to talk to us. And, all this took some convincing. I mean, nobody wanted to leave their doctoral thesis that they were writing about to come and talk to attractive, young Jewish women -- they had to be convinced that we were worthy of their time. And, I guess that's what - that was my contribution, that I could pull that off.

MF: And, is that still going?

BL: The Art Seminar?

MF: Yes.

BL: 220 members. And a waiting list of 102.

MF: Is that the name of it?

BL: Art Seminar Group.

MF: So, it's 200 members now?

BL: 220 -- with a waiting list of over 100.

MF: Are you still real active in that?

BL: In 1971, we were riding on a bus -- and Dr. Phoebe Stanton, who is an artist -- architectural historian -- and a world-famed woman, who teaches at Hopkins -- we were riding on the bus and looking at Baltimore as a great Victorian city. And she said, I don't understand why you girls don't go to England, go to London and see a really great Victorian city. And we said very innocently -- "Will you take us?" And she said, "Well, yes, I will." Well, she

didn't -- but, we went. And that was the first of 14 European trips that we took together.

MF: Was it a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish group?

BL: It wasn't then -- but it is very mixed now. It's as diverse a group as you can find. One of our male members -- and we have some males now -- including the man who just called me up -- said he'd never known of a Jewish organization that the WASPs were trying so hard to get into.

MF: (laughter) So tell me which direction should we head? What have we left out?

BL: We've left out my "Tips on Trips".

MF: OK. And then, I want to hear about your girls, too. Where are they --

BL: So, we'll go back -- let's talk about my girls.

MF: OK.

BL: My oldest daughter has a Chair at the University of Washington.

MF: Margaret?

BL: Margaret. Political Science.

MF: University of Washington in?

BL: Seattle. And this year, I want to tell you about this year. This year she was admitted to the National Academy of Arts and Sciences.

MF: That's great.

BL: She was voted the Professor who had done the most for her university. And she got a new Chair. She had a Chair. A lesser Chair. A less well-endowed Chair.

MF: Is Margaret married?

BL: Yes.

MF: What's her last name?

BL: Kaplan -- no, she's leaving -- but her husband's name is Kaplan. K-A-P-L-A-N. Also, she and her husband have one of the three outstanding collections of Aboriginal art in America. Major collection.

__: [pause in tape -- looking through papers...]

BL: Oh, let me show you the catalogue. There's a lot of it at the Seattle Art Museum. And they had -- when I say gallery -- not a gallery to sell anything -- a gallery -- they've outgrown their house, so they bought a condo to put this stuff in. And they are avid collectors.

MF: What's her husband do?

BL: He's a lawyer.

MF: Where did she go to school?

BL: She went to Western, Bryn Mawr College, and Harvard. Got her degree at Harvard -- her Ph.D. And, she's published 6 books -- unreadable. And she's a Russell Sage Scholar. She's a star.

MF: Does she have kids?

__: [pause in tape]

BL: My younger daughter who was a Senior Vice President at Christie's-- has been at Christie's for 20 years -- and now works for a gallery. A large gallery. An important gallery. And she's good.

MF: In New York?

BL: In New York. She does evaluations for the Met -- so you know she's good.

MF: So, your work in the Art Seminar really influenced your girls?

BL: Yes, it's interesting.

MF: Yes.

BL: But also, my League certainly influenced Margaret. And, Alice went to Vassar, and then went to the Institute of Fine Arts. But you don't know what that is -- but believe me, it's the Harvard of Art History.

MF: Where is it?

BL: New York. 78th and Park. The old Duke mansion -- with part of the Warburton Library there. It was started because all these artist historians came from Germany.

MF: Is Alice married?

BL: She's recently divorced. And she has two children. Her older daughter's graduating from Yale in June.

MF: What are their names?

BL: Caroline Duncan. Alice is Alice Duncan.

MF: Is that Caroline -- C-A-R-O-L-I-N-E?

BL: C-A-R-O-L-I-N-E. And her brother is Nicholas. And he goes to boarding school in Westchester. He comes home on the weekends, every weekend.

MF: Do you get to see much of them?

BL: Mmm hmm. I do. I went up to Yale, last weekend -- last week, not weekend. Not last week, the week before -- to, see Caroline's into Costume Design, and she did the sets and the costumes for *Twelfth Night*.

MF: Wow.

BL: So I went up to see that. And, she's going to continue her education in costume design.

MF: Tell me about grandmother-hood.

BL: Well, I love the children. I didn't get the opportunity to watch them grow up if they'd been in the city. But I've always seen them a lot.

MF: Yes. Did your girls have a Jewish life at all?

BL: Alice married a Christian, and they did nothing -- neither.

MF: Right.

BL: And Margaret and Bob belong to a synagogue - a temple. And they're healthy contributors. Because his family has a foundation. But, Margaret and I went to Israel. Alice didn't want to go. Bob is very Jewish-oriented. Margaret's not. She has a big Seder every year.

MF: And her husband's name is Bob-- Robert?

BL: Robert. She has a big Seder every year - -Margaret does. Huge. Invites all the graduate students who are Jewish, and who are there. Invites her Christian friends. Makes a thing of it -- about liberty and freedom and sermonizes it in a sense. Relates it to the things of the moment. I've never gone. She sends me the tape however.

MF: That's great.

BL: She's a good woman.

MF: Yes.

BL: And her husband won the American Bar Association Award for pro-bono work two years ago. Big honor. He got a Veterans' Hospital that was being closed. Absolutely didn't do anything

else for six months. Sat in Washington. Got the Veterans' Hospital converted to an out-patient hospital for the poor in Seattle. They're good people.

MF: I didn't ask you about what happened to Joe.

BL: He died.

MF: Oh, he died.

BL: In 1995.

MF: Was that from an illness, or --

BL: A long illness.

MF: Were you caring for him here?

BL: Mmm.

MF: So, that's when you all moved from the house?

BL: Mmm hmm. That's why we moved.

MF: To here. That must have been a challenging time.

BL: Whew. I had to do it by myself. I mean it was -- you know -- we'd been there what? 48 years? 49 years.

MF: What kind of illness was it?

BL: Well, we really didn't know -- for a long time we didn't know until the last week before he died. But he had multiple myeloma. And it had never been diagnosed properly. He'd had a valve replacement. And, he'd had some cancer problems. And we just thought he had gotten weak. And this was the man who walked the golf course every morning. He retired when he was 65 -- so that he -- he and his dog were a sight in this neighborhood. I mean, no matter what the weather -- they were doing it.

MF: So, you decided you had to move here and -- into the apartment?

BL: He couldn't do the steps.

MF: Yes, and then you did -- you did all the move?

BL: Yes, I had no choice.

MF: Right. Right.

BL: And then, subsequently, a nice thing happened, and my sister moved in here. They never expected to. But a huge apartment became available. And they have lots of antiques -- and an apartment twice the size of this one -- if you can imagine that.

MF: So that's been real good to have her --

BL: That's right. I mean, it is wonderful, and I have friends here. And, life's very good for me. And, I've interestingly enough made a lot of new friends. Not in the building.

MF: Tell me how you spend -- kind of divide up your time and your interest these days?

BL: I spend a lot of time reading The New York Times.

MF: Yes. (laughter)

BL: The New York Review of Books. Nation. The Economist. And, Art Newspaper, and art catalogues. And literature. I spend a lot of time with the art group which meets now, two or three times a week. I spend a lot of time visiting sick and old friends. I go to all the concerts. And, I don't do anything significantly useful.

MF: I don't think that's true.

BL: (laughter)

MF: Well, from what I hear, it all sounds incredibly significant.
(laughter)

BL: For me -- but not for anybody else. You know --

MF: No, no -- you give back a lot. It sounds like a really great balance.

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: It keeps you very active.

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: Yes. What's challenging for you now? Besides --

BL: How to get rid of Bush. (laughter)

MF: Whew.

BL: You better cut that out. Please cut it out.

MF: Oh, I believe you, though. It's awful, isn't it?

BL: It's more than awful -- it's very disturbing.

MF: Oh, it's just really hard to watch.

BL: It's scary.

MF: Yes. Were you a fan of Clinton?

BL: Well, I was and I wasn't.

MF: Yes.

BL: I thought that his potential was wasted.

MF: Yes. That was disturbing.

BL: That was disturbing.

MF: Incredible man. But, what were the "Tips for Trips"?

BL: Oh, that was the fun part of my life.

MF: Because I didn't ask you about -- you said that you were involved with teenagers.

BL: That's it.

MF: OK.

BL: When -- when Alice went on part-time at high school, I found out about an organization called The Foreign -- isn't that funny? I can't even think of the name of it now. It was a group that was taking people -- taking kids to Europe to study.

MF: Mmm hmm.

BL: And she was not interested in much. She was 14 years old, and she has this sister who was President of her class. And Vice President and head of the U.N. Association. I mean she was just all over the place. More than she needed. And a fabulous student. And, Alice seemed to be withdrawing. And so, when I heard that they were sending a group to Italy, and she'd always had extraordinarily good eyes. She was visually oriented. Like some people understand about music. But she was visual. And so, we sent her off. It was very courageous thing for us to do -- send a 14-year-old to Europe with a group. And the first note that we got from her was a postcard. "Dear Ma, How come you never told me about Bernini!" And it opened her eyes. It was the summer that just changed her life. And so, I became an advocate for those kinds of things. And, we sent Margaret to Morocco. And, she learned to bake bread in the sand. She worked in sub-Saharan Africa. And, we did all kinds of interesting things with the kids. And, people began to ask me for advice. And one night -- and I kept a card file, because I did research on all these programs. Not all of which I used for my own children. But I kept the research. Kept a card. Set up a card file. And one night, our lawyer was at the table. And,

somebody -- one of my friends called. And I said "Wait, I'll get my card file, and I'll tell you." And our dining room was here. And the kitchen was there. And there was a telephone. And I pulled it in from the kitchen so that he could hear it. You know, he was - he was just between marriages, and he came over all the time to eat with us, because his family lived behind our house. And, he would see his children. His wife was depriving him of them. So, he was there a lot. So, I didn't treat him like a dinner guest. And, when it was over, he said - "You mean you give this information away?" And, "I said, I do." I said, "Sure." He said, "You're crazy. With the way you guys like to travel. This is a--- and Joe's going to retire. This is a great thing. This will give you all kinds of tax benefits." He said, "I want \$500 dollars from you tomorrow. I'm going to set you up in a corporation, and make you do this." I said to him, "You let me think about this a little bit." Long and short of it was that I sent a letter out to 50 young families that I knew telling them how we do this. And I got responses from almost all of them. And one of the people that I got a response from was a gal named Louise -- now Barber -- but at that point Gomprecht.

MF: How do you spell that?

BL: G-O-M-P-R-E-C-H-T. You better call her Louise Zamoiski Gomprecht.

MF: How do you spell that?

BL: Z-A-M-O-I-S-K-I.

MF: And her daughter went off -- and she died in November. She died of hepatitis -- at a spring break when they were in Mexico.

And they didn't know it. And the girl had this fabulous summer. And when I went to call on her she said that, "I want to do this with you. I want other people to have that kind of happiness as my child had." She'd been a misfit. She had a beautiful mother and she'd been big, and not pretty and artistic and -- not academic. And so, she wasn't a scholar at school. And she had a rough social life as a 15-year old. And then, she has this wonderful summer before she dies. And so -- well I didn't know what I was doing when I said yes. And, she was rather persistent. And the Zaimoski's are a very prominent family in Baltimore.

___: [telephone rings in background]

BL: And business-oriented. And she had all the business genes that I didn't have.

And between us, we were a great couple. Because I could do the research, and she could do the---- and the last year before we sold it, we had 3,000 kids that we were sending from America to Europe, and Europe to America. And to camps all over. We had people in 14 cities representing us. It was a big success.

MF: What was it called?

BL: "Tips on Trips." Now, it wasn't a big financial success because neither of us wanted to earn a lot of money. But, it meant that I have now been to Paris 14 times. That I've been to Italy any number of times. That I could go on and on.

MF: So, you started that in --

BL: 1971.

MF: And then finished it in?

BL: Oh, '95. Actually, there was a big article about it in The New York Times "Business Section" -- and I threw it out. Damn it. Yesterday. God. Oh God, I was so dumb. I was cleaning stuff -- and trying to organize my window. And my movies got in there -- oh shoot, I did.

MF: Well, it sounds like a great thing.

BL: It was a great thing. And I had such fun. We did these workshops in New York at the private schools. And I got to know lots of people.

MF: And --

BL: And we went to Paris every year, and had a week of open houses at all the various private schools in Paris and brought kids from Paris to the United States.

MF: So -- but, how did it work though? Were you hooking up kids with travel programs?

BL: With travel programs, and then we ultimately went and hooked them up with summer camps.

MF: Ok.

BL: But not the normal, regular summer camps. Summer camps that had unusual experiences for kids.

MF: Yes.

BL: Travel camps. Adventure camps. Work camps. Anything that wasn't the traditional camp. And, it took fun research with young people who were creating these programs. And we got in on a -- on the bottom of this new development, where families were willing to send their kids to these offbeat programs, and not just to the kind of summer camp that I'd gone to.

MF: Right.

BL: So, that was an interesting chapter in my life.

MF: Yes, that's a great one. You know, glancing back over the survey that you had done -- you were listed in different historical events, and things had a really significant impact on you -- I want to make sure that I don't skip over those. And you mentioned that the Holocaust.

BL: Oh, it was devastating.

MF: Do you want to talk about that for just a minute. OK.

BL: Well, it's a soul-searching kind of thing. Do you know a writer name Seabold?

MF: Mmm hmm.

BL: He wrote a book called The Emmigrants. He wrote a couple of other books that I've reading. That's one.

MF: Yes.

BL: That's another.

MF: Right.

BL: (inaudible) He's going to win a Nobel Prize. He killed himself by accident. He was in an automobile accident. He had a heart attack behind the wheel. It's the most -- if you read those books, you know how I feel. I really don't want to talk about it. It's just....You know, I can't think of a God the way the Bible says to think of a God -- I just can't.

MF: So, that sounds like a period where you really lost faith?

BL: I really did. I really did.

MF: How did you come out of that?

BL: What do you mean?

MF: Well, what happened with those feelings?

BL: They're there.

__: (break in tape)

BL: That doesn't mean that I'm not proud of my Judaism. That's something else -- my Jewish background. That's a whole other thing. I really don't want to talk about it. I mean, I said it.

__: [pause]

MF: It says on here, too, "Depression in the early days of your (inaudible). She meant "The Depression" right?

BL: Yes.

MF: We talked about that. And that your grandmother was so strong, while your mother was --

BL: Well, she wasn't weak.

MF: Yes.

BL: That's not fair. She was devastated. I don't want to call my mother weak -- she wasn't. I have a real appreciation of what...

MF: Right.

BL: ... she went through.

MF: Well, that was really clear in everything that you said, you know? Her grandmother was a strong woman?

BL: I think we would have --

MF: Yes.

BL: Fallen between the cracks if we hadn't had her.

MF: Right. So you needed that partnership of those two women -- was important. I think that's the way it should be.

BL: Well, you see what's happened with 9/11 -- all these grandmothers taking over.

MF: Have you been reading the articles in The Times? Oh you know, I read every word of that.

BL: I just read that -- about the grandmas the other day.. I read every one of those obituaries, when they appear.

MF: I do too. I do too. The New York Times' coverage --

BL: Well, The New York Times is a thing in itself.

MF: It's just unbelievable. Amazing.

BL: There are two kinds of people that I know. There are people who read The New York Times, every day. And The New Yorker. And there are people who don't read The New Yorker or The New York Times. And you can quote that.

MF: (laughter) Right.

BL: And I don't want to know the people, unless they're carry-overs from my youth and I feel sentimental about them.

MF: I hear you. Your first cousins? Wellesley? U. of Penn?

BL: Radcliffe?

MF: Oh, worked with family archives and things?

BL: Every one of my first cousins went to a very decent college.

MF: As far as family archives, family materials, or family papers - are there specific things that you would want The Jewish Women's Archive to be aware of? Or that are important to you -- or photography or -

BL: Well, I've got a box of pictures that I don't know what to do with. That were -- they were of my grandmother's relatives. And, I'm sure that they're all dead. I don't know what to do with them. If someone would tell me, I'd be glad to give them --if they're of any value.

MF: Well, do you think the Jewish Museum here would be really interested?

BL: They never lived here. You know, they're not part of the Jewish heritage of Baltimore.

MF: Oh, so they were in New York?

BL: No, they were in Europe. These are pictures she brought with them.

MF: Yes, but it's your family's history. So, it's got a Maryland -- a very strong Maryland connection.

BL: I don't even know who they are. I've just got these pictures that I've never wanted to toss.

MF: Yes. I think the Jewish Museum here would be a logical place.

BL: I gave them all my mother-in-law's wedding dress and things like that. I gave The Jewish Museum in Washington something where she came from -- any papers about her family. And my brother-in-law, Louis, is on the board of The Jewish Museum -- or was, or you know -- always belonged. But, I don't think -- you know, I've got the papers coming over from the Hamburg America. But, most of the stuff my uncles took -- as they should have. And what they've done with it, I don't know.

MF: Yes.

BL: I had some stuff on my husband's family.

MF: Yes.

BL: You know, they have a Shabbas light. I gave that to somebody.

MF: Yes.

BL: And, I have this beautiful silver service that was given to his grandfather who was the first Treasurer of Washington Hebrew in Washington.

MF: And where did that -- do you still have that?

BL: I have it. I'll show it to you.

MF: Yes.

BL: If you want to see it.

MF: Yes, I'd love to. Beatty, what have I not asked you that you wanted to talk about?

BL: Well, I think this -- I want to sum up with this. I was at a -- there's a club in Baltimore. ---- the Hamilton Street Club. I had lunch at the Hamilton Street Club the other day. And this is who was at the table. And, I think it says everything about what has transpired in my life in this city. At the table was the Curator of Islamic Art at the Walter's Art Gallery, who comes from Germany. And her name is Regina Schultz.

MF: Do you know how to spell that?

BL: R-E-G-I-N-A. But it's pronounced ruh-gee-na. Schultz. S-C-H-U-L-T-Z. Next to her -- and, she speaks very poor English. Next to her was Nancy Waxter (sp?) whose family is old, old Baltimore. And, she's originally from Chicago -- and blue blood, and in the Blue Book.

MF: Not Jewish?

BL: Not Jewish. Next to her was Sylvana Khouri. K-H-O-U-R-I. Sylvana is of Armenian parentage. Her family fled to Beirut. And, who is Catholic. Her husband, who is a great friend of mine -- name is Neri -- N-E-R-I. Khouri. K-H-O-U-R-I. And he

was - he's a Palestinian-born in Haifa. Next to her was a woman whose name is Elizabeth Hogan -- which is not her husband's name. And, he was head of the Foreign Desk at The Washington Post. She spent her whole adult life with the US/AID in East Africa. I was sitting next to her, and I am of Eastern European, or Central European, Jewish background. Next to me was Romaine Summerville, whose husband is true blue blood. The family that owned -- his mother was an Abel (sp?) They owned The Baltimore Sun -- she is Ukrainian, Orthodox Christian. The kind of people that my family fled from. Next to her -- was Barbara Schorliss -- also Jewish -- from probably the same background as mine.

MF: Is that S-C-H--

BL: L-I-S-S. That was the table. That couldn't have happened when I was born. That could not have happened.

MF: So, what changed?

BL: Well, that's really what I thought we were going to talk about. What made those changes.

MF: Well, do you want to speak about that?

BL: Well, the war certainly did.

MF: Mmm hmm.

BL: Air travel. The great University in this city - which brought people like the Khouri's. And Barbara Scherliss and her husband. A tolerance on the part of Christians towards Jews.

MF: Mmm hmm.

BL: When I entered Goucher -- and I was seated alphabetically in one of my first-year classes. And I was away for the Jewish

holidays. And, my maiden name began with "L". And, the woman next to me -- when I came back from the Jewish holidays -- her name was Kaestner said - - "are you Jewish?". And, my reaction was -- "she doesn't want to sit next to me." What she said was -- "Will you be my friend? I've always wanted a Jewish friend." We remained friends. But, I had to unlearn my suspicion, and she had to reach out. And, I think that's what has changed.

__: [long pause]

MF: That's some group around the table.

BL: That's what's happened to the Art Group.

MF: That kind of diversity?

BL: Mmm hmm.

MF: We have a whole South American group that -- one from Venezuela. Two from the Argentine. One from Chile. We have two grandchildren -- or grand-children - -of Teddy Roosevelt -- who are members of the group. I went to the Christmas part of one of them. And, she wrote me a thank you for coming -- She wrote me a thank you for coming, because she was so happy to have a friend such as me. Come on. Do you think this could have happened? I've seen such remarkable things -- I cannot tell you.

MF: Yes.

BL: When, well...

MF: I wanted to hear your final remarks on that.

BL: I've been a witness to great social changes in this city. The movement to people within the city. The zoning laws that got

changed that permitted Jews to live all over. The inter-mingling of people. The opening up of Hopkins to Jewish faculty. That people are recognized for merit, rather than where they were born, or who they were, who their parents were. And what absolutely amazes me, is that, that seems to be -- the awareness of this -- seems to be at only one level. I would venture that if you talked to everybody in this building -- and it is overwhelmingly a Jewish building. It is a Jewish building. You would find that the parochialism that existed in my early days that I was part of -- is still generic to most of their thinking. And, I think that that is a result of the -- and, I don't say that it is wrong. I am not in any position to criticize....that the creation of the State of Israel has had quite a role. That the temples and synagogues play an increasing role trying to hold their people in.

MF: Right.

BL: But, it's only at one level that I will call "Inter-faith" for lack of a better word. Openness to other people. I went with several of my friends to a church at the end of September, when they were having a panel discussion -- when Islam -- with members of the Islamic Institute -- the Society here. And, I met a man who is a retired cardiac physician who had been at Hopkins for many years. I met a man. He was in the audience. He had just come -- he was not part of the panel. He and his wife. And we talked a lot. And then, I saw him again at a Foreign Policy Association meeting. He happened to be sitting next to me. And the man next to him, who I knew, fainted. And he helped that man. And so we talked a little bit, because I knew this man, and I knew who

he was, and knew how to contact his wife, and all of that. And so, I subsequently asked him for dinner. And his wife. And my friends were horrified. Not my good friends. Not my -- but -- "How can you - when they hate us so much?" And that's what worries me. It worries me that the Jewish community is not opening up to all the opportunities. We're still fearful. That's it.

MF: Ok. I think that's a good close. All right. So, I'll just say the Closing Announcement. We are finished with our second tape.

BL: We went on too long.

MF: And, it's 3:45. And with Beatty Levi in Baltimore, Maryland, on February the 4th, 2002.

END OF CD 2

ADDENDUM

Interview with Beatrice L. Levi by Brenda Brown Rever

November 8, 2002

BR: This is Beatrice Levi that I am interviewing today. My name is Brenda Brown Rever and today is Friday, November 8, 2002. We are in Baltimore, Maryland, and I am interviewing Beatrice Levi; we call her Beatty. This is the *Weaving Women's Words* project. This is a continuation of an interview that transpired before. We are meeting each other today to talk about some of the things we feel might have been left out and that were very important in Beatty's life. Let me start by saying I have read your interview and I loved it; I truly loved it. I love that I know who you are. I am proud to have known who you are because I think you've accomplished an awful lot in your life and I'd like to talk about that.

I want to go back for a minute, though, to a part that started in the beginning at School 64 because you said that you went to School 64. You had very close friends there and some of them continued to be your friends. Tell me about that.

BL: There was a small group who lived in the neighborhood, walked back and forth together and has remained friends. While we separated when we went to Junior H.S. we attended Sunday school at Beth Tifiloh and

were confirmed in the same class/ WE came together in a High School sorority called Sigma Theta Pi and while our interests diverged at Goucher, the bond remains tight. The high school sorority played an important role. We were addressed by a wonderful woman named Peppi Legum Wiener who introduced us to the importance of community service and gave direction to our lives.

BR: Still friends. So who are your friends that were your friends then?

BL: Well, Ethel Jacobs is one. When she comes up from Florida, which she does for all the Jewish holidays, we gather together. Another one is Audrey Bornstein. I see her all the time; she belongs to the art seminar group. There are others, like Lois Feinblatt who was somewhat younger.

BR: Netsy Lieberman, when did she come into your life?

BL: Her father and Ethel's father were in business together. They owned Aetna Shirt Company. I don't know if this is of great consequence but Annette used to come to play with Ethel, and so out of that grew a friendship that continued. She also went to School 49 and she went on to Western.

BR: And she went to Goucher?

BL: I was a year ahead of her, and about 6 months older. We were always very close friends at a certain level. And our husbands became friends.

BR: Oh really. Tell me about the role that friends have had in your life.

BL: Very important, and still are.

BR: (Talking with male present in room.)

BL: The role of friends. Friends have always played an important part in my life. I have been fortunate enough to stay in the same city. Many people move around and so the contacts are lost. In my case, I was born here; I went to high school, to college, and so that continuation meant that the same relationships could continue forever.

BR: When you got involved in the League of Women Voters, was that with...

BL: No, there were breaks in our relationship as far as interests go. I was very committed as a citizen in a sense, to things that were going on in the community. I think that the reason I chose the League of Women Voters was that it was not service oriented; the League was oriented around issues. I felt that my energies could be better put to use around broad civic causes.

BR: What were the issues?

BL: Well, the issue early on was women voting. The League of Women Voters came out of the suffrage movement and you realize that women got the vote only at the time I was born. Interestingly, I read the other day – I had forgotten – that the women in France and in Italy didn't get

the vote until after World War II, which is shocking. Women in the U.S. had the vote but didn't use it; and that was shocking to me as well, and frustrating. There wasn't the participation by women in voting; and so it was one of the projects that I engaged in very early on. In the League I got to know women who had really made long commitments.

Women who had actually been involved in the suffragette movement. I mean, coming along 25 years later – they were still there. They were inspirational. And by the time I became active or was involved in Child Labor Legislation, Civil Rights, redistricting, reform of municipal courts and other hot button issues.

BR: You talked about the first President of the League of Women Voters.

BL: The first President of the League of Women Voters in Baltimore was a great woman, Mrs. Emil Crockin. She was very committed to education for women. There was a succession of women that I got to know better, many of whom are still my best friends. One of the more valuable things that I have in the other room is a drawing that was given to me by Betty Thompson, who was President of the League of Women Voters and who I still visit regularly at the Roland Park Nursing Home. We became such good friends that when I moved into the apartment, she gave me one of her precious Daumiers, (an original); saying that she was going to will it to me but she thought that I ought to have it and enjoy it now. And I am very close to someone named

June Wing, who was also very active in the League and was a past President. These people influenced my life and they influenced my children's lives. When a great woman named Carrie Ramsey ran for Congress, Margaret and Alice – both were stuffing envelopes and running around with their mother delivering things – pamphlets. Carrie Ramsay did not win, but we tried.

BR: Your daughter – I read in her interview that you took both girls to see Martin Luther King and that they were in a lot of civil rights marches.

BL: We marched. We marched and we marched. We marched for everything that there was to march for that we thought important to our future lives. We certainly marched for integration; we marched against the Viet Nam war and we marched!

BR: What do you think that means? Where do you think that came from – the spirit of – I felt that you very much admired diversity in people.

BL: I still do.

BR: And still do. Where did that come from?

BL: Well, I think part of it came from the fact that, as I said in that earlier interview, my mother and grandmother and my uncles felt a part of the town they grew up in – they didn't feel isolated from the general community. I think growing up in a little town called Salem, West Virginia, where they were the only Jewish family; they had to have

friends of all kinds. I think that that kind of thinking was certainly part of my home education. It was a value that was established. Even though I might tell you that my grandmother crossed the street and wouldn't walk in front of a church because she remembered the pogroms in Russia. She just wouldn't. That had nothing to do with her relationship at a one on one level with her neighbors which was very friendly.

BR: But the interest in civil rights and Martin Luther King – and your daughter said that you dressed them up as twins...(laughter).

BL: Clothes made by my mother, beautifully embroidered. They were always well dressed well when we went on a march because we wanted to make the point that it was not just a black movement but it was a movement that was inspired by the sense of fairness that we had. Now was that part of my Jewish heritage? I don't know. My husband was a very strong supporter of equality for all people. He was always so supportive of whatever we were doing. I think that I am what I am because of him. I think that he was level headed and I might have been prone to over enthusiasm at some point. He was always one to look at both sides of every story. That's the other thing that I learned in the League. I don't know what the League has become, because so many single-issue organizations have popped up that the League is no longer the strength that it once was. Two things have happened to the League. One that is common to all organizations is that volunteer

women with the quality of mind that was put into the League; those women are now lawyers and doctors, educators. Those same women are not available on a day-to-day basis. Going back to the League – the League always explored both sides of an issue before they reached a conclusion. It was something I didn't find at the Council of Jewish Women, which had been the alternate organization that I might have gone into and whose work I admired. The League was not an organization from the top down; it was an organization from the bottom up. Whatever was decided was decided by discussion units all over the neighborhoods of the city.

BR: That's how it was organized?

BL: That's how it was organized and that appealed to me.

BR: Let's talk a little bit about your husband. I know you did in the first interview but we want to talk a little bit more about...

BL: I didn't really talk about him sufficiently in the first interview. Because he was almost ten years older than I was, there was a respect early on for his life experiences. He'd had a devastating change to his life because of the depression – his father died in '29, his mother lost a lot of money, and there were a lot of changes in his life. I think that that gave him a stability that might not otherwise have happened. He had a wonderful mother, highly intelligent, interested in many things and he admired her very much and was grateful for her independent spirit.

BR: Just like his wife. (Discussion with a male in the room.) (Inaudible)

When you say that you had a certain respect for him...

BL: Well, in a sense, I came from a family that was disconnected – I mean, we were here, my uncles – who played a large role in my life because I was fatherless – who were not living in Baltimore, and Joe's family had been here forever and they were stable. Their graves in the Baltimore Hebrew Cemetery – from 1857, little infants, little graves. They were here very early. Part of a family, Frank family (inaudible) Eli Frank's family. So there was that kind of stability; I don't know another word.

BR: I want to ask you a question, having read some of the other interviews. You grew up with sort of an expectation, as a young woman, as a teenager, etc. Tell us a little bit about what your expectations were for your life, as a teen-ager or as a young woman.

BL: Well I always thought I'd do something. I always thought I was career oriented. I don't think that there's any understanding, going back, about the impact of that typhoid fever episode. Remember I was in the hospital; I was on the verge of getting a job with Vogue magazine. I was in the hospital from May until the end of September. When I came out at the end of that year, I was de-energized. Then Joe came into my life, and I don't want to say that it was an easy way out, because that is not true. Almost from the moment we met we knew that we were right for one another. But I missed an opportunity because of that episode.

During the war I should have gone to law school. Again, I was torn. I was waiting for Joe, I was ...he would be in Newport News one minute and I'd pack up and go there, and he would be in Wisconsin and I'd go there. There wasn't this quality of time to go to school. Then I became pregnant and was a mother. I really think that in those days I was a full-time volunteer at the League and it was a career; whether I got paid for it or not...and I was not alone. There were lots of people who were available every day for every job that came along.

BR: Well, when you say you thought about going to law school, when you were raised by your mother and grandmother...

BL: I was encouraged. I think there was recognition right along that I had the energy and hints of talent. I say this in all humility. I always got very good grades in school, I was always a leader; there were no male children. There was the feeling that I could accomplish what I wanted to do.

BR: It is this intellectual curiosity that I find fascinating; because I think intellectual curiosity is actually the key to your life. You were born with that; you were lucky to have that; that intellectual curiosity led to a lot. I want to talk about your daughters because your business years ago kind of started with trying to enrich your daughters. Tell us more about where your daughters are today.

BL: My oldest daughter, who in her field is really a star, just won a
Guggenheim. She has been, along with our former Secretary of State,
invited into the National Academy of Arts and Sciences last year. Her
research is of a very high quality and recognized. She has been
program leader, President of one area of the American Political Science
Association, and has been the convention chairman of the larger
American Political Science Association. She's now first Vice President.
She says she won't be President, but don't take bets on it.

BR: She has her Ph.D.?

BL: She got her doctorate at Harvard. In addition to that she also has a
major art collection, a creative collection of aboriginal art, Australian
aboriginal art. Last year I went with her and her husband to visit some
of the communities in Australia where they buy the art. It was an
incredible experience for me. There were seven of us. One was her
mentor who had won a Nobel Prize in economics, Douglas North, and
his wife who was the head of Cambridge University Press. Another was
an anthropologist, a close friend. My daughter and her husband go to
Australia twice a year – I'll show you what some of it looks like. It took
a lot of imagination to see the potential of this art. There are about fifty
pieces on loan now at the Seattle Art Museum. They have bought an
apartment near their house because they couldn't get any more
paintings or sculptures into their house and they created a gallery.

They didn't want visitors coming in and of the house any longer, it got to be a nuisance. It is not a sales gallery, it is a small museum. That's daughter number one.

Daughter number two is equally accomplished though it doesn't read as well. She was a senior vice president of Christie's for 20 years.

BR: Her Degree?

BL: Masters of Fine Arts from the Institute of Fine Arts. Vassar before that. Margaret went to Bryn Mawr and then to Harvard. Alice went to Vassar. So I feel that's my life's work.

BR: But she is currently...

BL: She currently runs a gallery in New York City. A very prestigious gallery; what is known as an "uptown" gallery that handles only American art, not contemporary, but American art. For example, they have a Gilbert Stewart for sale right now. Not anything that most people can afford is sold there.

BR: Tell me about...I know that though both girls live out of town, you're obviously very close to both girls. When they were growing up was there...could you trace how you were as a mother to how your mother was with you?

BL: Well, my mother had problems that I never had. Part of it was the loss of a husband when she was 25 years old, with a 13-week-old infant and

a 5 year old and a family that went to court to sue her for benefits that they thought my father should have left them. She was traumatized by that, absolutely traumatized. Fortunately, she had the support of her mother and her brothers. She was widowed for a while, a young widow; then she made a marriage that was – it was certainly not a bad marriage, it wasn't a great marriage. That might have been her attitude – that nobody could measure up to what she had before; I don't know. I would think that was part of it.

BR: Did she give you a lot of freedom? As I was reading, you had a great deal of independence.

BL: Well, I think that she had a lot of understanding. She was an intelligent woman and she knew that she couldn't deal with a daughter who was as energetic as I was without having loose reins. It might be also, I don't know, I've never reflected on this – it might have been also that she felt that she'd been so constrained; that her talents had never been utilized and she wasn't going to have that happen to my sister or me. She had another baby when I was 13 and so she was used up. It might have been easier for her to let go. It's the immigrant idea of giving your child every opportunity that you didn't have and it might have been that she was held back and didn't want that to happen. I hope that was what it was.

BR: How were you with your children? Did you give them a lot of independence?

BL: A lot of independence and opportunities. They had a very supportive father who believed in that. He understood young people very well. He should have been dealing with youth as a life's work, but of course it didn't turn out that way. When I met him, he was the Boy Scout leader of a Boy's home on Linden and Wilson. These were kids who had been incarcerated and this was a halfway house. He was there almost every day for an hour or so. Even in our early marriage.

BR: You were also very good with children. I mean that was something that you...

BL: I listened to them.

BR: Your business was...

BL: Well, it came. Wheezy, my partner was better with children than I was. I was better with adolescents.

BR: (Inaudible)...the adolescents.

BL: I liked them. I still like them.

BR: Tell me what you like about them.

BL: That they're moving and that they're experimenting, and that they're enjoying what life can give them or they're trying to grab at it. It's a very exciting time for them. It's also a time of great choices and it's

easy for them to make wrong choices; you have to have understanding about that.

BR: How do you get understanding about that?

BL: I think you develop that kind of understanding of what the kids are going through. This is a very rough period. There's almost too much out there and it's usually available, good and bad. I think it's important to experiment with some of the drugs and know that they're not good. I mean, at least learn for yourself. We didn't discourage marijuana smoking in our house; we did not. We thought "This is a phase but this too will pass, just keep quiet about it".

BR: Did they do this while in your presence and you said okay?

BL: No, I think they went up to their bedrooms and did it, but that's all right (laughs); we knew it was there.

BR: What do your children say to you today about your parenting?

BL: Well, I got an email from my daughter on the anniversary of her father's death, which was October 20. She's in Hungary right now. I should have saved it. "When I reflect upon my life", she said, "I realize what wonderful parents I had and how lucky you were to have the husband you had."

BR: Was this number one or number two daughter?

BL: Number one daughter.

BR: Your husband Joe died; how long ago was that?

BL: He died in 1995.

BR: That was seven years ago and that was a very different life then. Tell us a little about that.

BL: Well, I think that people who – I'm going to be rather specific – I think that people who carry their grief too far and who are in sense crybabies – do themselves an injustice. Widowhood can be a very enriching time of your life, particularly if you value your women friends and you value your relations with your daughters, or son-in-law in my case, and my sister and her husband. It's given me a time to do the kind of reading that I can now do without interruption. It's given me the ability to do what I want to do when I want to do it without making any compromises. It's given me a chance to make different kinds of friends that might not have been compatible to both of us. It's given me an opportunity to attend certain functions that I might not have attended because of illness or no desire to share that particular activity. So it's a time that can be very, very rewarding if you decide not to feel sorry for yourself and to enrich your life in ways that you might not have done before. I think I do much more serious reading because there are no interruptions. It's been a good time in my life.

BR: The art seminar group – has your work with them increased since widowhood?

BL: No, no. But the art group has gotten to be such an institution in this city and really such an important institution that it's given me a great deal of satisfaction. I know the museum directors look to me, in a sense, for certain kinds of advice, which is very rewarding. I know that out of the art group has come interest in the museums. People would not have participated in the way that they do. I know people are buying art at a different level than they might have bought.

BR: Also, you've educated a great many people who normally would not have been educated in this way.

BL: That is true, absolutely true and I'm surrounded by people in the leadership group, or the art seminar group, of high intellect whose standards go higher and higher every year. That's been a very satisfying thing for me. The art group just happened; it was not anything that was planned. It just really grew out of a need.

BR: But isn't a lot of the reading you do research for programming?

BL: I do a lot of that.

BR: Tell us a little about the programming. You were doing a program this year; I thought it was going to be Muslims, or Arabs and Jews together.

BL: Well, I'm trying hard and we're going to have a program tomorrow night – a man's coming from Haverford who wrote the book that

engendered all the excitement at the University of North Carolina when it was put on the reading list and the Christian Right took it to the courts to prevent the kids from reading it. The courts, of course, agreed with the University.

BR: Is this about the gay...

BL: No, this is a book about Islam written by a professor at Haverford. We had asked him to speak to us well before any of this. This engagement was made with him before he hit the front pages of the New York Times. That was part of our program in learning about Islam. We have a continuing program about that.

BR: You find a lot of these people.

BL: Well, there's a whole group of us there finding...I mean, the art group's become an organization; it's no longer one or two women. It's an important organization with people out there with knowledge; ex-curators belong, the President and past President of Goucher belong. It's at that level now.

BR: You just took them to Seattle, didn't you?

BL: Yes.

BR: Tell us about that; the fact that you now...

BL: We went to Seattle because it was a community that my daughter Margaret knew very well and I'd been there sixty times or more. We

knew that it was an art-oriented community, unlike Baltimore. The support that the collectors and the people in Seattle give to the museum and to their collections and to the local artists is unbelievable. We learned a real lesson there, about what a community can do. In fact, I'm pulling together stuff for a meeting I'm pulling together about the need to do the same thing in Baltimore and how we go about organizing people to be aware of what could happen to a community if there's interest in art.

BR: Let me ask you this. I want to just get back for one minute – about the friends that have been with you in the art group.

BL: My friends in the art group are now very different.

BR: Didn't you start with a group of your friends?

BL: Yes, who are still there if they're still alive. Many of them are dead. It has expanded and so as it has expanded my friends in the art group have expanded.

BR: You're very vital; you keep abreast of everything that's going on. Is this because you have friends from everywhere and they're all ages?

BL: I think that has a role. I have young friends that give me a lot. I have friends like Wheezy Barber and Barbara Himmelrich and Peggy Heller who I speak to almost daily who are very much part of my life. They

are many years younger than I am though they won't admit it. They say "You're not 83". But I am 83 and I guess I've learned a lot over...

BR: I want to be 83 the way you're 83, I can tell you that right now! I think it's wonderful; it really is.

BL: It's there for the taking, dear.

BR: The one other thing that I really want to talk to you about – I guess, and I shouldn't lead you anywhere but it's that pluralism again; that even-handed way you have of dealing with the fact that...I think your intellectual curiosity has led you to be surrounded by many, many different kinds of people.

BL: Yes, and I reach out. I have enough self-confidence to think that if I'm interested in them, maybe they'll be interested in me. I have a new friend who is very impressive. He started the whole program at Johns Hopkins for the medical school, bringing in the study of the humanities. We've become very good friends. I have a lot of men friends, which is valuable to me – to have men that are my friends – not any sexual relationship but just my friends.

BR: That's great. Is that something that happened later in life?

BL: No.

BR: You always had men friends. I think that brings us to – if you were having this dinner party at your house – I have told Beatty that I was

going to ask her this question. I wanted her to bring three people; they could be dead or alive; she could have not known them or known them. I wanted you to tell me different people and tell me why they would be there.

BL: I think if I had a dinner party and I could choose three people, I would choose my husband and my two daughters. I would tell you that the conversation would be as stimulating and as interesting as if I brought together three people like Judy Chicago and Susan Sontag and people at that level of intellect. I think my daughters are both very smart; very interested in what's going on; really knowledgeable. I think my husband was witty and fun and knew how to bring a light touch to everything that always was very helpful. No conversation got too agitated; nobody got too upset; included diversification of views on many subjects. He always knew how to get a laugh into it and that's a wonderful attribute that's missing from my life.

BR: I want to thank you. I love, Beatty, when you talked about your dinner party, you did get a twinkle in your eye and I could see the happiness on your face. We really do appreciate this. It was a wonderful interview and I've learned a lot and I thank you very, very much for it.

BL: I didn't say that I'm a privileged woman but I should have said it. I feel very privileged. I've been one of the lucky people in the world. You know, a marriage is luck.

BR: I know that. (Laughs) I know that. That's the truth. I didn't ask you if you had a good marriage.

BL: You didn't have to.